Talent Management: Beyond the Buzzword

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http://appel.nasa.gov
Q. What is talent management?

A. 75% of organizations don’t have an agreed-upon definition.

Fifty-one per cent of respondents undertake talent management activities, although only 20% report having a formal definition for it.

Developing high-potential individuals (67%) and growing future senior managers (62%) are the two main objectives for talent management activities.

In-house development programmes, coaching and succession planning are the most common activities.

The most effective practices are in-house development programmes; internal secondments; and coaching. Succession planning, external secondments and action learning are considered to be the least effective.

Ninety-four per cent agree that well-designed talent management development activities can have a positive impact on an organisation’s bottom line.

Forty-seven per cent agree there is currently a shortage of high-quality talent in UK organisations.

Source: Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (UK), “Reflections on Talent Management”
So Why Do We Care?

- Increasing project complexity
- Workforce demographics
  - Baby Boomer retirements
  - Declines in engineering / S&T graduates
- Mobility of talent

Average Age of NASA Workforce

Trend =

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Holistic Thinking about Talent Management

- Who is in the learning pool?
- What are they learning?
- How are they connecting to future opportunities?

How do development approaches differ in these sectors?

Academia / research institutes

Industry

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NASA Approach

K-12 programs (STEM education)

Examples:
- Astro Camp
- Engineering Design Challenges
- Exploration Infusion
- FIRST Robotics
- Great Moonbuggy Race
- Spaceward Bound

Photo credit: Proyecto Access

Universities

Examples:
- Cooperative Education program
- University partnerships
- Summer internships
- Grants and scholars programs

NASA Approach

Training curriculum for all career levels
Hands-on assignments
Coaching and mentoring
Expert practitioner support to teams
Knowledge sharing forums & publications

Key assumption: 90% of learning takes place on the job
All activities competency-based
Stories are a powerful means of sharing knowledge

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# 4-Level Career Development Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Core Course</th>
<th>Developmental Assignments</th>
<th>Learning Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE LEVEL</td>
<td>PROGRAM OR VERY LARGE PROJECT MANAGER</td>
<td>Core course: Executive Program</td>
<td>Cohort selected by NASA senior leaders</td>
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<td>Mentoring</td>
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<td>Leadership by example in knowledge sharing</td>
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<td>MID-CAREER</td>
<td>LARGE PM OR SYSTEMS MANAGER</td>
<td>Core course: Advanced Project Management &amp; Systems Engineering</td>
<td>Developmental assignments</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing forums</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
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<td>In-depth courses; rotational assignments</td>
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<td>Participation in knowledge sharing activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>MID-CAREER</td>
<td>SMALL PROJECT MANAGER OR SUBSYSTEM LEAD</td>
<td>Core course: Project Management &amp; Systems Engineering</td>
<td>Performance enhancement for teams</td>
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<td>In-depth courses; team lead assignments</td>
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<td>Attendance at technical conferences or knowledge sharing activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENTRY</td>
<td>PROJECT TEAM MEMBER OR TECHNICAL ENGINEER</td>
<td>Core course: Foundations of Aerospace at NASA</td>
<td>Non-traditional learning experiences</td>
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<td>Obtain mentor</td>
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<td>Join professional associations</td>
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LEARNING STRATEGIES:
- Cohort selected by NASA senior leaders
- Knowledge sharing forums
- Developmental assignments
- Performance enhancement for teams
- Non-traditional learning experiences
- First level of APPEL core curriculum
Cultivating a Learning Organization

**APPROACH**

**INDIVIDUAL**
- Training curriculum
- Hands-on work

**TEAM**
- Direct support to project teams
- Online assessments
- Workshops
- Mentoring and coaching
- Expert practitioners
- Team building and process support
- Forums for project managers, systems engineers, and principal investigators

**ORGANIZATION**
- Knowledge sharing
- Publications
- Case studies
- Communities of practice

**ACTIVITIES**

**INDIVIDUAL**
- Core curriculum for 4 career levels
- In-depth offerings in subject areas
- Project HOPE: competitive selection for hands-on opportunities

**TEAM**
- Online assessments
- Workshops
- Mentoring and coaching
- Expert practitioners
- Team building and process support
• Talent management typically focuses on individuals -- complex projects are always team efforts

• Increasing complexity demands increasing skill levels
  - traditional PM: cost, schedule, performance
  - communications, negotiation, persuasion

• Top talent will go where the challenges are